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ACSI-IC

The Watch Committee -- National Indications Center

ACSI

DFI

20 March 1962

Lt Col Brinson/77569

1. Description of agenda item. The USIB will consider proposed replies concerning (a) the recommendations of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board regarding "Advance Intelligence Pertaining to the Berlin Wall and Syrian Coup Incidents" and (b) Mr. J. Patrick Coyne's memorandum concerning "The Watch Committee -- National Indications Center" at its 21 March meeting. Mr. Coyne's memorandum is attached at Tab "A".

25X1A9a 2. Background. Mr. Coyne's memorandum to the DCI was considered by a working group. The working group's report is attached as Tab "D". This report was used by General Fitch, Mr. Hillsman and [REDACTED] together with information obtained from interviews with other people, as a basis to prepare the draft reply to Mr. Coyne.

General Fitch's memorandum to the DCI, forwarding a proposed reply, is attached at Tab "B". The proposed reply to Mr. Coyne is attached at Tab "C".

3. Discussion. The following briefing outline is suggested to present this problem to USIB:

a. Point out that all USIB members are familiar with the proposed reply to the Coyne memorandum since it was disseminated on or about 5 March. Comment on the length of the proposed reply.

b. Cover the seven (7) points in Coyne memorandum.

(1) NIC functions more in nature of a staff of the Watch Committee than as a type of entity normally looked upon as a warning center.

(2) The NIC is not tied directly to the US indications centers deployed throughout the world.

(3) DIA-CIIC is tied directly to the various military indications centers deployed throughout the world. Feasibility of abolishing the NIC and establishing the DIA-CIIC as body for supporting the DCI, USIB and Watch Committee in the areas defined in DCID 1/5 should be explored.

(4) Some information required by the NIC has not been furnished in a timely fashion because of the absence of direct channels and other information was either not furnished at all or was obtained by the NIC on an informal, "unofficial" basis.

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(5) NIC has never been adequately staffed, and has little or no capability at hand for automatic or other technical processing of intelligence inputs. NIC is not organized to operate in such a manner as to assure that advance indicators of hostile action will be received, evaluated and sent to the policy-makers with the possible maximum speed.

(6) Watch Committee procedures should be modified to assure that the Watch Reports reflect significant differences of view (reference is made to the Berlin Wall and Syrian coup incidents).

(7) An indications center of national character should enjoy adequate priority in the intelligence community and should have adequate data processing facilities to ensure getting full value from the information which it collects.

c. Discuss manner in which Coyne memorandum was handled.

(1) Three man working group composed of personnel from NSA, CIA and DIA was appointed to examine the special problems presented by Mr. Coyne's memorandum. (Report attached at Tab "D")

(2) Discuss actions of the ad hoc committee appointed by the DCI on the problem. (Interviewed General Cabell, General Carroll, General Quinn, etc.)

d. Briefly discuss conclusions of your committee (Tab "B").

(1) NIC properly organized and discharges its functions in an effective manner.

(2) Marginally manned and could use a small augmentation of personnel (six more people).

(3) NIC functions should not be transferred to or combined with the functions of DIA-CIIC.

(4) DIA-CIIC should not assume multiple agency functions. It must remain completely responsive to DOD and JCS requirements.

(5) Change name of NIC to "National Warning Center" to more accurately describe the mission of the NIC and avoid confusion possibly created in some minds by the similarity in name between the NIC and the CIIC.

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(6) NIC should not assume the detailed analysis of possible indicators now performed by Defense, State, CIA and other intelligence agencies.

(7) NIC receives virtually all information from the intelligence community with the exception of certain closely held messages. Many of these messages should be released to the NIC under the provisions of NSC 5438 (Tab "E").

(8) More responsive (speedier) communications are required between NIC and CIA and NIC and State. Recommend that this matter be studied.

(9) NIC must remain contiguous to the CIIC. (Does not necessarily mean must be "next door." NIC must be tied to the DIA SSO and message centers by pneumatic tube in order to receive information at the same time it is forwarded to the CIIC.)

e. State that the proposed reply to Mr. Coyne, although somewhat lengthy, covers all of the points raised in the Coyne memorandum.

f. Pass out draft copies of the proposed reply and ask for comments and/or recommended changes.

4. Points of issue. There are no known points of issue. However, CIA may propose the addition of a paragraph to the effect that decision makers should recognize that the intelligence community must continue to make warning judgments based on less than full proof and less than complete information. Such judgments may be limited to a conclusion that the Soviets are taking actions which, among other possibilities, could mean that they intended to initiate hostilities.

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1. Tab A - Coyne Memorandum
2. Tab B - Memorandum to DCI
3. Tab C - Proposed Reply to Mr. Coyne
4. Tab D - Letter to General Fitch
5. Tab E - DCID 1/5

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6. Tab F - DIA-CIIC Terms of Reference
7. Tab G - Extract NSC 5438
8. Tab H - Working Group Terms of Reference